

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 14 No. 4

Anthony Buzzard, editor

January, 2012

Revelation of God in the Gospels

The important question for all of us who want to please GOD is, Who is God and who is Jesus? We are to worship God in “spirit and truth.” We are not to worship God with our own traditions. Worship is to be on God’s terms. We should pay careful attention to the creed of Jesus in Mark 12:29.

Consider these partially excellent reflections from the article on the Trinity in *The Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (Vol. 2, p. 760-761):

“**The witness of our Lord’s consciousness as revealed in the gospels...**He certainly regarded himself as the Messiah, and...the names and titles by which he described himself and permitted others to describe him are **Messianic** in their significance...He stands in a relation of **unique intimacy with the Father** (Matt. 11:27)...He calls God ‘my Father’...The cloudless serenity of his relation to God...He speaks as one who sees clearly into the heart of God...[He lives] a life which is wittingly and willingly all that God would have it be...He claims distinctly certain Divine attributes and privileges. He is King and Judge of all. He is to be the object of most absolute trust, the utmost devotion. No sacrifice is too great to be made for his sake. To reject him or his messengers is to reject God and to incur the severest judgment... ‘All things have been delivered to me by my Father’ (Matt. 11:27)[cp. the Great Commission].”

Do we realize that we Christians are to be like Jesus?

“When we turn to the Fourth Gospel, we find this teaching expressed with a fullness and clearness of statement which ought not to appear extraordinary. [John gives us a] revelation of the inner life of that wonderful Personality. What is truly extraordinary is that the inner history, as we have it in John’s Gospel, does not reveal any essential element which cannot be found, expressed or implied, in the external histories [of Matthew, Mark and Luke].”

Now this wonderful admission: “**We must never forget that Christianity was built on the foundation of Jewish monotheism. A long providential discipline had secured to the Jewish people their splendid heritage of faith in the One and Only God:** ‘Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh, and you are to love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.’ This was **the cornerstone** of

the religion of Israel. These were perhaps the most familiar of all sacred words to the ears of **the pious Jew**. They were recited continually. **Our Lord himself had them frequently in his mind** (Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27).”

But this is precisely what churchgoers today have forgotten and ignored. They assemble under a creed which is not that of Jewish monotheism! The Trinitarian Seventh Day Adventists, some 23 million of them, announce their creed: “The keystone of our theology is that ‘One plus one plus one equals one.’” This should be compared with the cornerstone of the theology of Jesus in Mark 12:29!

More from the dictionary: “That Jesus thought of God always as the Supreme One is unquestionable. Indeed the very idea of Fatherhood, which with our Lord is the characteristic conception...becomes in his teaching absolutely monotheistic because absolutely universal. To the Jewish mind, the sovereignty of God was the natural and characteristic thought. In our Lord’s teaching the Divine Fatherhood overshadows and also transforms the Divine Sovereignty, but never threatens to dissolve the pure and splendid monotheism of the original doctrine...There are three degrees of the Divine Fatherhood presented in the teaching of our Lord: God is the universal Father; He is, in a very intimate and special way, the Father of the disciples of Jesus; He is, in the highest and unique sense, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...We find, then, that the teaching of Our Lord and of the Gospels concerning God is the union of a true and unwavering monotheism with a great doctrine of mediation, according to which God and man enter into very close relationship in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

If the article had then added in support of its major point the wonderful monotheistic words of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5, “There is one God, and one mediator between that one God and man, the MAN Messiah Jesus,” all would have been well, and an article on the Trinity would have been totally unnecessary. But it now goes on to waffle its way into some sort of bridge to the Church’s denial of the excellent words said of monotheism so far! The denial, in fact, of the creedal words of Jesus in Mark 12:29.

The article continues by referring to the “modern philosophical and theological terminology” which is used to create a doctrine of the Trinity. The author says of Jesus, “His Ego had a distinctness and concreteness

surpassing any other human being who ever lived. Our Lord was very man, and his Ego had all the self-possession and concreteness which give to every human soul its personal distinctness. While we find, in his self-revelation, that he constantly entered into a communion with God, which is quite without parallel in human experience, and that he knew the heart of God from within, **we also find him always distinguishing himself as a Person from the Father.** There is no trace anywhere of the breaking down of the boundaries of personal life...Jesus' utterances reveal no displacement of the centre of personal life...This personal distinctness may be seen clearly in the following passages. They are among our Lord's greatest utterances: 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. The Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels. Whoever will be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Not what I will but what You will. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? My Father is working until now, and I am working. I and the Father are one [Gk. *en*, one thing, i.e. one in purpose, as the disciples also must be, John 17:11, 22, not *eis*, one Person]. I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.' These examples are selected out of a great number. The Fourth Gospel is especially rich in such passages... 'You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be one in us. I in them and You in me that they may be perfected into one.'"

This good statement indicts at once the amazing belief of "Oneness Pentecostals" that the Father and the Son are the same Person. It also makes utterly untenable the belief held by Jehovah's Witnesses that the Son is himself really an angel!

The author then notes that John is emphatic about "the humanity of our Lord...yet he is our clearest teacher about the Divinity."

Note here that the word Divinity is slipped in. This is itself a "fog-term" allowing for various understandings. The author's purpose is to introduce the notion that the Son is fully God and thus a member of a Triune God! The monotheistic creed of the Jew and Christian teacher, Jesus, slips out of sight!

First, however, the author is frank enough to concede that the Son is subordinate to the Father. As proof he cites Mark 13:32, "No one knows the day [of the Second Coming] except the Father. Even the Son does not know." The author adds: "Here is a clear assertion of the subordination of the Son." When it comes to the inferiority implied by Jesus in the saying "The Father is greater than I," the author tries to produce this as a proof

of the "Divinity" of Jesus because "For a mere man to say this would be monstrous or absurd."

From the lucidly simple declaration of Jesus himself that "God is one Lord" (Mk. 12:29) we have been surreptitiously led into a view of God as Triune, which Jesus would not have recognized. Jesus never, ever said "I am God," or "I am Yahweh." Those titles belong to the "only one who is true God," i.e. the Father (John 17:3). ✧

Sources for the Calvin and Luther Quotes from the November Focus

Calvin: "Whatever virulent tongues may bluster, in this faith it will always be safe to acquiesce; as also it will be desirable to remove the occasion for many perplexing questions, and to desist from forms of expression either too uncouth, or too far removed from the usage of Scripture. The common prayer has become trite – 'Holy Trinity, one God, Pity us,' does not please me, and altogether savors of barbarity. I should therefore be unwilling for you to dispute about empty trifles; only let that instruction which I gave you concerning three persons in one essence, remain pure."

Ad Fratres Polonos (To the Polish Brethren), 1563, in Calvin, Opera (1870), vol. 9, pp. 647-648. Vol. 37 of the Corpus Reformatorum.

Luther: "This name Trinity is never found in the Scripture, but is the invention of men. Therefore it sounds somewhat cold; and it is much better to say 'God' than 'Trinity.'"

"Sermon on the Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday," *Predigt am Sonntag nach Pfingsten, sogenannt S. der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, in Luther's Works, Erlangen edition, Vol. 12, p. 378.

If We Deny Him: The Definition of Apostasy

by Keenan Lyon, Canada

If we endure, we will also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us. 2 Timothy 2:12

What does a man write who, facing the prospect of imminent death, sits down to write to a dear friend? "I know whom I have believed," wrote Paul to Timothy, "and am fully persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

Paul was supremely confident. "The time of my departure is at hand and I am now ready to be offered up. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Writing as one who had “fought, kept, and finished,” Paul wanted Timothy to keep a close eye on his own faith and ministry, as Paul himself had done. And so he exhorts, “hold fast... keep... endure... flee... follow...continue...watch.” Especially, Timothy must be alert, vigilant, because of the certainty of the increase of apostasy (fake teachings) as the age wears on. “Bad men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, misleading others and misled themselves. But you, on your part, must continue to abide by what you have learned and been led to rely upon, because you know from whom you learned it and that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures which can give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:13-15).

Are we all paying attention to these solemn words? That the Scriptures warn men against the peril of apostasy, no one will deny. Many have assumed that apostasy is possible only for men who never actually have entered into a saving relationship with God. Their thesis is unacceptable, however, for the following reasons:

(1) It is contrary to a specific principle clearly enunciated in the Scriptures; (2) It is contrary to the meaning of the word itself; and (3) It is contrary to the significance of the warnings in the light of context.

1. The erroneous thesis concerning apostasy stands in direct contradiction to a specific principle affirmed numerous times in the Scriptures, perhaps nowhere more explicitly than in our Lord’s declarations to his disputants: “If any man is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (John 7:17). “Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father the Devil, and you want to do the desires of your father...If I speak truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them [in the sense of understanding], because you are not of God” (John 8:43-47).

If any man is willing...i.e., if anyone desires to do God’s will. The force of the argument lies in the moral harmony of a man’s purpose with the divine law so far as this law is known or felt. If there is no sympathy for the things of God there can be no understanding. The principle is universal in its application. The will of God is not to be limited to the Old Testament revelation, but includes every manifestation of the purpose of God in the Scriptures. For this reason, because the power of hearing (v. 43) depended on inward affinity, the Jews could not hear, and because of their unbelief they were not of God.

The Scriptures uniformly affirm that men who are not motivated by a true desire to *obey* the will of God (Heb. 5:9) cannot, under such circumstance, come to a

true apprehension or sincere persuasion of divine truth. They “hear” without hearing and “see” without seeing (Matt. 13:12-15). Face to face with light, they remain in darkness — for one reason alone: they do not want to obey the truth. They may have some sort of approximate intellectual understanding; but they can have no real apprehension or persuasion of God’s truth apart from a sincere will to obey Him. The thesis that apostasy is the act of men who have come to a sincere apprehension and persuasion of the truth of the Gospel without a corresponding desire and intention to obey the truth is diametrically opposed to a specific principle clearly affirmed in the Scriptures.

2. Again, the thesis is contrary to the meaning of the term. The English word apostasy is derived from the Greek noun, *apostasia*. This is defined as “a falling away, defection, apostasy; in the Bible from the true religion.” The word appears twice in the New Testament (Acts 21:21, 2 Thess. 2:3). Its meaning is well illustrated in its use in Acts 21:21: “You are teaching apostasy (defection) from Moses” (*apostatian didaskeis apo Mouseos*).

A kindred word is the synonym *apostasion*. This is defined as “divorce, repudiation.” The context is clear from Matthew 19:7 and Mark 10:4: “a bill of divorce” (*biblion apostasiou*). There is also Matthew 5:31: “Let him give her a bill of divorce” (*doto autei apostasion*). The use of *apostasion* by Demosthenes is “defection, of a freedman from his patron.” The definition of this word is that of repudiation.

The meaning of the verb *aphistemi* (2nd aorist infinitive, *apostenai*) is, of course, consonant with the meaning of the nouns. It is used transitively in Acts 5:37: “drew away people after him” (*apestesen laon opiso autou*). Intransitively, it means *to depart, go away, desert, withdraw, fall away, become faithless, etc.*

Apostasy, according to New Testament usage, constitutes defection, revolt, withdrawal, departure, and repudiation. An apostate, according to New Testament definition, is one who has severed his union with Christ by withdrawing from an actual saving relationship with him. Apostasy is impossible for men who have not entered into a saving relationship with God. (See Luke 8:12-13. Unbelief is found in both verses; but it is mere unbelief in v. 12, whereas it constitutes apostasy in v. 13).

3. Again, their thesis is contrary to the significance of the many warnings against apostasy, as defined both by language and by context. The warnings against succumbing to the ugly peril of apostasy are directed, not to men who have not as yet obeyed the Gospel, but to men who obviously are true believers. Consider the following passages: Matt. 24:4-5, 11-13; John 15:1-6; Acts 11:21-23; 14:21-22; Col. 1:21-23; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1

Tim. 4:1, 16; 6:10-12; 2 Tim. 3:13-15; 4:2-5; James 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 1:8-11; 3:16-18; Jude 19-21; 1 John 2:23-25; Heb. 2:1-3; 3:1, 6-8, 12-14.

Let us consider the warning in Hebrews chapter 10 in detail. The warning against “sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge [*epignosis*] of the truth” (v. 26) is addressed not to unbelievers who are halting short of faith, but to “brethren” who “have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way” (vv. 19-20), and who “have a high priest over the house of God” (v. 21) — men who need only to “hold fast the confession of hope without wavering” (v. 23) and to continue “the assembling of ourselves together” (v. 25) for mutual encouragement in the faith, as they “see the day [of Christ’s coming, v. 37] approaching.” The readers to whom the warning is addressed are “brethren” who already “have done the will of God” (v. 36) to the present moment, and who need only to “not throw away your confidence” (v. 35) in Christ. They already are believers who now should not be “of those who shrink back so as to perish, but of those who by faith preserve the soul” (v. 39).

The writer exhorts them: “Let us keep on drawing near [*proserchometha*] with a true heart in full assurance of faith...Let us keep on holding fast [*katechomen*] the confession of our hope without wavering...Let us keep on considering [*katanoomen*] one another to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (v. 22-25).

The writer follows his vigorous exhortation with an immediate urgent warning: “For if we [not *they*, as some seem to imagine] go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth...” (v. 26). In such tragic circumstance, men who actually had been sanctified by the blood of the covenant (v. 29) would be equally as guilty of apostasy and deserving of greater punishment than those who rebelled against the law of Moses, who died without mercy. The writer urges his brethren therefore to “keep calling to remembrance” (*anamimneskesthe*, present middle imperative) the early days following their conversion, when they gladly suffered persecution and loss for Christ, setting their affections on “a better possession and a lasting one” (vv. 32-34). Let them now “not throw away your confidence” (v. 35). “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay” (vv. 36-37).

But he must warn them again: God has said in His word, “Now the righteous shall live by faith, but if he shrinks back, my soul [I] will have no pleasure in him” (v. 38). The subject in both clauses is the same — the

just man, the man who is in good standing with God by his faith; and the sense in which *hupostellesthai* is here used is that of not keeping faith, wavering in faith, forsaking the path of faith and the community of the faithful. The just man, the man accepted before God, lives by faith; but if he loses his faith, and faithlessly draws back from the right path, his acceptance is forfeited. He loses his salvation. That such apostasy is possible even for those who have been truly justified, i.e., for Christians who have had more than a superficial experience of divine grace, is one of the main points of instruction in this epistle. To teach this lesson, the clauses of the prophetic utterance are inverted. The second, as it stands here, is a warning as from the mouth of God Himself, a warning in a high prophetic tone. But the writer, as twice before, resumes the language of comfort and encouragement after words of the saddest foreboding. He proceeds, with pastoral gentleness and wisdom, to encourage the fainthearted and establish their wavering by rousing their Christian confidence, and associating himself with them as exposed to the same dangers, and courageously defying them.

“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul” (v. 39). The persons meant are not Christians in general, but the writer of the epistle and his readers. Our way, he says, is not that cowardly shrinking back from Christian faith and confession which the God of prophecy has denounced as so infinitely hateful to Himself, and which leads to destruction (*apoleia*, antithesis of *zoe* and *soteria*), but a steadfast, abiding faith and reliance which bases itself on the *zesetai* of the prophetic promise — has for its end the salvation of the soul. The man who keeps his faith to the end, saves his soul, wins it back from the pit of destruction which threatened to devour it, and so may be said to gain and possess it for the first time as now truly his. (See Jesus’ words to his disciples: “By your endurance you will gain [*ktaomai*, win] your lives,” Luke 21:19.)

The popular doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” is untrue to Scripture.

Examples of Biblical Apostasy

That the peril of apostasy is real, rather than imaginary, is evident from the fact that the Bible records actual numerous instances of it.

Jude warns his readers against the peril which constantly confronts them in the insidious activities of apostate teachers among them. In his description of apostates who “turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only master and lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4) and whose wicked careers and just condemnation “were long beforehand foretold” (*prographo*, to write or describe beforehand; see Eph. 3:3) by Enoch (vv. 14-15) and others in ancient times,

Jude says that they are “autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted” (v. 12; see John 15:1-6).

Jude’s language is explicit. Jude’s description literally is “having died twice.” It is concerned with the past, rather than the future. The tragic circumstance, “twice dead,” is the lot of men who, having once “passed out of death into life” through faith in Jesus Christ, have turned back to walk no more with him, so becoming “dead in trespasses and in sins” once again. “Twice dead” can only refer to the fact that men who once were alive in Christ have again become spiritually dead by severing their union with him “who is our life.” Furthermore, Jude refers to the specific occasion and cause of their spiritual death: “They have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished [*apolonto*, killed themselves] in the rebellion of Korah” (v. 11).

Like Korah and his company of old, who denied the unique authority of Moses and profanely usurped the functions of the ordained priesthood, the apostates whom Jude cites denied the unique authority of the one mediator and the finality of his Gospel, as defined by Jesus and the Apostles. From Jude’s comments, it is evident that their defection had its origin and development in their love of lascivious living and their practical repudiation of the implications of the lordship of Christ over the personal lives of all who would be his. They were therefore “without fruit” (John 15:1-5; 2 Pet. 1:8) and, as the inevitable outcome, were plucked up by the roots and became “wandering stars.” Despite their inward spiritual defection, they still retained their outward affiliation with the believers, continuing to enjoy places of prominence and leadership. Through their spiritual defection, they had become men who had “slipped in stealthily” into positions of undeserved influence and honor. (To assume that Jude meant in v. 4 that they had originally entered the church on the strength of empty professions which were false from the beginning and that they never had been other than mere hypocrites is to contradict the historical examples which he cites — the apostates in the wilderness [v. 5] and the angels who did not keep their first estate [v. 6] — and to deny his assertion that they “killed themselves” in their rebellion against the Lord after the example of Korah [v. 11] and are now “twice dead.” Furthermore, to adopt such an assumption is to nullify Jude’s urgent warning to believers to beware the peril of following the same tragic course as the apostates [vv. 20, 21].)

In his second epistle, Peter writes at length concerning apostates who, “denying [*arneomai*, disown, renounce] the Lord who bought them” (2:1), for love of “the wages of unrighteousness” (2:15), “have left the straight road and gone astray,” becoming “dried-up springs” (2:15, 17). There could be no greater tragedy.

“For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge [*epignosis*, full and true knowledge] of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way [*hodos*, road, “the straight road,” v. 15] of righteousness than, having known it, to turn away [*epistrepho*] from the holy commandment handed on to them” (2 Pet. 2:20-21).

Those who assume that Peter’s reference to apostates as “dogs” and “sows” proves that they never were actually under grace do not likewise assume that Jeremiah’s reference to the children of Israel in Judah as “a wild donkey” proves that they never were “the sheep of His pasture.” The shameful epithet was applied by Jeremiah (2:24) only after the people had forsaken the Lord (2:13; 17:13) and turned aside in iniquity and idolatry. Likewise, it is only after they “have forsaken the right way and gone astray” that Peter compares apostates to dogs and sows. He could well have referred to them as “wild donkeys.” But there were familiar proverbs about dogs and sows which so aptly illustrated their case. Let us accept the record at face value. ✧

Is Anyone Listening?

Here is some more important information about the severely mistaken mistranslation of the second lord of Psalm 110:1.

“**Another similar confusing mistranslation** is to ignore the palpable difference between *Yahweh*, Supreme Being, and *Adoni*, in Hebrew, *my master*, and to render both by *Lord*; translating, for instance, in Psalm 110:1: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand.’ The plain sense is: ‘Yahweh, God, said to my master, the king, sit at my right hand.’ Jesus did distinguish between God and king; he gave ‘to God what was God’s and to Caesar what was Caesar’s’...Every Hebraist knows that *Adonai* [the supreme LORD] applies to God, and *Adoni* to man. But the written scrolls in Hebrew...had only consonant letters; they had not the comparatively modern vowels; hence were both the words spelled alike, but differently pronounced: *Adonai* and *Adoni*.”¹

Translations today, with some few exceptions, continue to deceive readers by translating the second lord of Psalm 110:1 as “Lord” (with capital L) which everywhere else represents ADONAI, the title for the One God. But the Hebrew of Psalm 110:1 gives us ADONI, my lord, *not my Lord*, as the second lord. This is of course the classic reference to and prophecy of Jesus the Son of God. Jesus referred it to the Messiah and silenced all opposition with Psalm 110:1 (Mark 12:35-37). Peter makes this verse the center of his teaching about who the

¹ Maurice Flugel, *The Messiah-Ideal*, 1896, p. 265-266.

risen Jesus is (Acts 2:34-36). Jesus is the MAN Messiah, ADONI, not the Lord God, ADONAI.

Our translations give us the disastrously wrong impression that God (Yahweh) is speaking to GOD! This makes two Gods and violates the most important of all commandments and understandings. We are to love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength the ONE God of Israel, the God of Jesus. This is the God who knew who He was! “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” This is the God and Father of Jesus, “the one who alone is true God” (Jn. 17:3). Jesus is the MAN Messiah, as distinguished from the one and only God who is the Father (1 Tim 2:5).

This fundamental difference between ADONAI and ADONI should be carefully taught to all Bible students, and from an early age! There are not two who are ADONAI (Lord God), but only one, the Father of Jesus. ✧

Comments

“I am writing you after watching your debates online and reading your teaching on Restoration Fellowship. For many years I have questioned the Catholic unification of fides et ratio, faith and reason — as we are taught in the Catholic Church — which states that Christianity must have Greek metaphysics as a foundation to explicating Christian faith. But, I can no longer unite pagan pre-Christian metaphysics to Christianity in my personal belief system because I believe it is too far reaching and makes Christianity appear to be a cover for a Greco-Roman religion. And when one separates metaphysics from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, the Trinity can simply no longer hold together — if one only has the Bible in hand to prove the Trinity.

“I have searched my whole life for God and the true religion — since I was 8, and it led me to the Catholic Church back in 1998, but being a student of theology, currently completing my BA in Theological Studies, I simply can no longer accept an erroneous doctrine of God as the foundation of my life. From your teachings and from my biblical studies in college I have come to understand that the Christian Scriptures teach and I truly believe that YHWH is the Father and Jesus was created at his miraculous conception and is only the Messiah and the Representative of YHWH. I found that when I read the Christian Scriptures with that understanding it all comes together — like a key that has long been lost and since being found reveals the truth of all. But when I would read the Christian Scriptures through the lens of post-Nicean Christianity the New Testament does not make logical and coherent sense, especially the Jewish themes in the New Testament.

“What do I do now that I have this new belief? I know there are no biblical unitarian groups down here in

Southwest Florida — what do I do? I would like to become a biblical unitarian. I looked at the Unitarian Universalists and they are not biblical, and Islam, but I cannot accept the fact that Jesus would need a Prophet to come after him, plus after reading parts of the Qur'an it goes against the non-violent teachings of Jesus which are superior to teachings which validate war. Islam will not work for me theologically for other reasons as well. What shall I do now that I have believed in biblical Unitarianism — which I see as biblical Christianity? What about baptism and progressing in this new understanding? I look forward to corresponding with you on this and ask your prayers.” — *Florida*

“I scoured and devoured your book on the Kingdom (*The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*). Every man ‘of the cloth’ and every committed layman should pore over the pages weekly until the content becomes part of their skin. Such an important and central subject that has been ‘criminally’ and ignorantly neglected must be ignited once again and entered into the curriculum of every seminary, Bible school, adult training center, and missionary school. Second, I feel that a Kingdom curriculum should be developed now, even if rudimentary and fundamental, to be explored and enjoyed by adult Christian education classes everywhere. Wouldn’t that be a rewarding project for the Atlanta Bible College senior class?

“The second book, *They Never Told Me This in Church*, is a marvel as well. Greg Deuble has employed his God-given gifts of research, wisdom, insight and proclamation to bring us a ‘story-like’ presentation of Scriptural veracity that touches upon so many gnarled and inaccurate Bible-related subjects. It’s a book that can bring new light back into darkened and apostate churches that still wish to be regarded as Christian. Greg’s book sounds the alarm to every Christian that Biblical truth comes at a price. The highest and perhaps the most arduous challenge is to sweep clean the ravaging influences of ancient Greek philosophers and 4th-century churchmen and reform their theology from ‘replacement theology’ to ‘restoration theology’ — back to the Bible.” — *Florida*

“Thanks a lot for each issue of *Focus on the Kingdom*. I am enjoying your teaching a lot.” — *Guatemala*

“I very much enjoyed the latest *Focus* (November). A couple of points: On page 4 you very correctly link ‘I AM’ — I am (he) — and I am the Messiah. Most Trinitarians will tell one that the words ‘I am’ represent God’s sacred name. What is generally missed is that the Greek words used are *ego eimi* — and that these words are used elsewhere in the NT to denote persons *other than* Christ or God. Consider John 9:9 and Acts 10:21. On page 6 you mention Revelation 3 and state that this shows that Christ still has a God. Even more striking is

Revelation chapter 4 in which we see God's throne surrounded by an assembled throng. The one on the throne is credited with the creation of the heavens and the earth. We also see a lamb among the throng — who is deemed worthy to open the seal. Somehow Trinitarians claim that the Lamb becomes the one Supreme God — in spite of what 1 Corinthians 15:28 says. Keep up the sterling work!" — *Zimbabwe*

"Just sending you a 'Thank You' and letting you know that I do regularly receive and read your magazine. I appreciate your generosity and insight." — *Michigan*

"A good friend of mine connected me with your web site. I just finished your online book *Who Is Jesus?* and loved it. Without going into too much detail at this time I have not believed in a Trinity or Oneness since I was a teen. Yet for many years I thought I was all alone in my thinking. Every time I tried to talk to others, well, you know what happened. Finding sites like yours and having a great friend to talk about what I believe has been a great encouragement. I know now how to better share with others what I have believed for so long with better Scriptures. I am struggling for fellowship. I have been a pastor for some time and now feel that is changing." — *Texas*

"I'm a reader of your articles in your site and I realize that as a professing Christian I still have a long way to go. I find your written articles as somehow an awesome answering instrument to most of my questions all about following the true Jesus and the true God, and I can see that your books are an awesome aid that can educate people here in my country too." — *Philippines*

"I am watching your videos with great enthusiasm. I have always believed the son to be in the Father as he himself states but I have always doubted (since childhood) that he (the son) is YHVH. I know that Yeshua is the name above ALL names meaning that Yeshua holds the most powerful characteristic of all the other names of YHVH; by that I mean that Yeshua encompasses salvation, provision, peace, healing, power, etc. I am pursuing truth and you are a very helpful source." — *Youtube comment*

Without realizing it, many of you live in the same city or town as other subscribers of our magazine. If you would like to be put in contact with these others of like faith, contact Robin Todd, administrator of the Worldwide Scattered Brethren Network. His email address is robinsings4u@comcast.net; and mailing address is 5704 20th Ave. S.E., Lacey, WA 98503. Coming together in local fellowships is a way many are trying to become more visible with the true gospel in their communities. In a group we can become more effective in the great commission, each one contributing according to the gifts and talents he/she has been given. It's a work no one person can successfully shoulder alone.

21st Theological Conference May 3-6, 2012

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

Another year is becoming history, and we are not far from our 21st annual "Theological Conference." (Do not for a moment let that title deter you. "Theology" has become a dirty word in some circles, but is only the study of God and His will.) The dates are May 3-6, 2012, in Atlanta. Do come, and bring your friends.

As I revisit some of the remarkable and very moving faith stories presented over the years, I am impressed with all the good things that have been reported by those from all parts of the world who have attended. The talents of wonderful, technically skilled believers allow us to film the proceedings. This enables the work of the conference to be *permanently* available on websites. The fruits of the conference stretch far beyond the brief time we have together as Simpsonwood. Please join this effort. **This year Dr. Dale Tuggy, Professor of Philosophy at The State University of New York (SUNY Fredonia) and a committed unitarian, has agreed to be among our speakers.**

The fact is that fellowship with others of the same faith is a vital necessity for our communal and individual growth. Please *do* make the effort (and sacrifice) to bless us with your presence at Simpsonwood Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia. Transportation will be available to and from Atlanta Airport. The conference is, as in the past, from Thursday evening to mid-day Sunday.

You may wish to be baptized possibly. These have always been moving occasions for us all. You may wish to give your "faith story." Some of you will be meeting fellow unitary monotheist, Gospel of the Kingdom believers for the first time. Others will renew long held friendships. We do hope that you will be able to make the trip and be inspired by the various speakers. Our emphasis is on presenting the faith to the world as our necessary participation in the Great Commission. The Kingdom of God must be preached worldwide, Jesus said, and only then will the end come (Matt. 24:14). We need to consider our individual part in that effort. The arrival of the astonishing tool of the Internet makes Matthew 24:14 possible in a way never possible before.

We have exciting new websites to report, and a gifted younger generation is adding their skills to the important issue of making public the saving truths we hold in common. Also, my 10-minute video "Jesus is Still a Jew" at youtube.com now has about 75 pages of comment in the form of concise statements of our common beliefs. Along with huge increase of public exposure, Abrahamic are increasing their influence, but we need to do much more. The Great Commission remains a large task!